

Colonel Rice has recently returned from Diego Garcia, where he was the commander of the 28th Air Expeditionary Wing, overseeing the entire B-1B operation for the ongoing war against terror, Operation Enduring Freedom. In addition to coordinating bombing missions from the command center on the ground, Colonel Rice added to his more than 3,600 hours of air time in combat aircraft by flying bombing missions against Taliban and al-Qaida controlled strongholds in Afghanistan. I applaud the efforts of Colonel Rice and all of the men and women in Operation Enduring Freedom. Since joining Congress in 1987 I have appreciated the professionalism, hard work, and commitment to excellence of Ellsworth's commanders and personnel. Colonel Rice has added to that tradition, and under his leadership the effectiveness of the B-1B, especially in recent operations in Afghanistan, has proven again why that aircraft is the backbone of our Nation's bomber fleet.

Colonel Rice graduated from the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, in 1978, and went to flight school to become a B-52 pilot. He also has experience flying aircraft that include the B-1 and the B-2 Stealth bomber.

Throughout his distinguished career, Colonel Rice has held a variety of significant operational positions including commander of the 34th Bomb Squadron at Castle Air Force Base, CA; deputy commander of the 509th Operations Group, at Whiteman Air Force Base in MO; and commander of the 552nd Operations Group, at Tinker Air Force Base, OK.

Colonel Rice served as a White House fellow from 1990-1991. The program selects midcareer professionals for a variety of assignments, usually from outside of their normal field of expertise. Colonel Rice worked in the office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

In 1994 and 1995, Colonel Rice served on a blue-ribbon government panel examining the military's structure in the post-Cold War era. Colonel Rice moved to the West Wing of the White House in 1997, when he was named deputy executive secretary to the National Security Council. He served in the White House until he was assigned to Ellsworth for his first command of a combat bomb wing.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Colonel Rice, his wife Teresa, and their children, on this well-deserved promotion.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages

from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 65

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was ordered to lie on the table.

To the Congress of the United States:

Mr. Speaker, Vice President CHENEY, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

As we gather tonight, our Nation is at war, our economy is in recession, and the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers. Yet the state of our Union has never been stronger.

We last met in an hour of shock and suffering. In four short months, our Nation has comforted the victims . . . begun to rebuild New York and the Pentagon; rallied a great coalition; captured, arrested, and rid the world of thousands of terrorists; destroyed Afghanistan's terrorist training camps; saved a people from starvation; and freed a country from brutal oppression.

The American flag flies again over our embassy in Kabul. Terrorists who once occupied Afghanistan now occupy cells at Guantanamo Bay. And terrorist leaders who urged followers to sacrifice their lives are running for their own.

America and Afghanistan are now allies against terror . . . we will be partners in rebuilding that country . . . and this evening we welcome the distinguished interim leader of a liberated Afghanistan: Chairman Hamid Karzai.

The last time we met in this chamber, the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school. Today women are free, and are part of Afghanistan's new government, and we welcome the new Minister of Women's Affairs, Doctor Sima Samar.

Our progress is a tribute to the spirit of the Afghan people, to the resolve of our coalition, and to the might of the United States military. When I called our troops into action, I did so with complete confidence in their courage and skill—and tonight, thanks to them, we are winning the war against terror. The men and women of our armed forces have delivered a message now clear to every enemy of the United States: Even seven thousand miles away, across oceans and continents, on mountaintops and in caves—you will not escape the justice of this Nation.

For many Americans, these four months have brought sorrow, and pain that will never completely go away.

Every day a retired firefighter returns to Ground Zero, to feel closer to his two sons who died there. At a memorial in New York, a little boy left his football with a note for his lost father: "Dear Daddy, Please take this to Heaven. I don't want to play football until I can play with you again someday." Last month, at the grave of her husband, Micheal, a CIA officer and Marine who died in Mazar-e Sharif, Shannon Spann said these words of farewell: "Semper Fi, my love." Shannon is with us tonight.

Shannon, I assure you and all who have lost a loved one that our cause is just, and our country will never forget the debt we owe Micheal and all who gave their lives for freedom.

Our cause is just, and it continues. Our discoveries in Afghanistan confirmed our worst fears, and show us the true scope of the task ahead. We have seen the depth of our enemies' hatred in videos where they laugh about the loss of innocent life. And the depth of their hatred is equaled by the madness of the destruction they design. We have found diagrams of American nuclear power plants and public water facilities, detailed instructions for making chemical weapons, surveillance maps of American cities, and thorough descriptions of landmarks in America and throughout the world.

What we have found in Afghanistan confirms that—far from ending there—our war against terror is only beginning. Most of the 19 men who hijacked planes on September 11th were trained in Afghanistan's camps—and so were tens of thousands of others. Thousands of dangerous killers, schooled in the methods of murder, often supported by outlaw regimes, are now spread throughout the world like ticking time bombs—set to go off without warning.

Thanks to the work of our law enforcement officials and coalition partners, hundreds of terrorists have been arrested. Yet tens of thousands of trained terrorists are still at large. These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we must pursue them wherever they are. So long as training camps operate, so long as nations harbor terrorists, freedom is at risk—and America and our allies must not, and will not, allow it.

Our Nation will continue to be steadfast, and patient, and persistent in the pursuit of two great objectives. First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. Second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world.

Our military has put the terror training camps of Afghanistan out of business, yet camps still exist in at least a dozen countries. A terrorist underworld—including groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Jaish-i-Mohammed—operates in remote jungles and deserts, and hides in the centers of large cities.